

Our Boys and Girls

THE PUNISHMENT OF JANE.

By S. C. C.

One beautiful spring day, and a Saturday at that, Jane sat in her room and studied a psalm. She could see the boys playing ball on the lawn and longed with all her heart to join them. So did a brown spaniel that lay on the floor by her chair and wagged his tail in sympathy with the happy shouts that came in through the windows. When a louder one than usual floated in he would get up and, placing his paws on the sill, look out in great excitement. Then he would go back and lie down with his head on his paws and watch Jane with perplexed eyes. Jane did behave so queerly at times. This was not the first time that she had come off to her room and sat with a book on her lap while everyone else was out-of-doors.

"Run along, Butch, dear," Jane said. "I know you want to go. If you wait for me to be good, you'll stay here all the afternoon. I'm not a bit better than I was when I first sat down."

Butch wagged his tail, but otherwise did not move. Jane studied another verse, rocking slowly, then dropped the Bible in her lap and looked out of the window.

"Butch," she said, suddenly, "let's run away."

Thinking this sounded more promising, Butch stood up expectantly. Jane thought a minute, then nodded her head determinedly.

"I'll do it," she said. Going softly to the door, she listened with her ear pressed against it. Then, with such caution that she stood on one foot and shut both eyes, she opened it. After a hasty look around, they squeezed out, crept down the steps and out of a side door, and ran.

There was a wonderful apple tree that Jane was headed for, so thick with blooms that if she reached it without being seen she would be safe. She did reach it safely, and, once under the pink mass, she "skinned the cat" for pure joy and then climbed up. Butch looked disappointed. He couldn't climb trees and he felt very dismal sitting alone on the ground.

"Now, Butch, darling, you run and catch a nice little rabbit." Jane pointed in pretended excitement. "There, Butch, look! S-sick 'im!"

This was a sound the dog was not proof against and he dashed away after the fated rabbit.

Jane looked all around her pink house with its black rafters to see that there were no holes through which her blue dress might be seen. Then she lay back with a comfortable sigh and closed her eyes. By reason of long practice she was as much at home in a tree as other people are in chairs. Studying psalms always made Jane drowsy, so in a few minutes she was dozing peacefully. Suddenly a stiff little breeze swayed the pink tree. Jane awoke with a start to find herself clinging to the branches and almost facing the ground. For a second she did not move. There, not three feet from her face, were the large eyes, ears and horns of Florence, a yellow cow, who stared up at Jane with great interest. Florence once had chased a small colored girl who lived on the place, thus earning for herself the reputation of being a very fierce animal, to be avoided as such. Consequently Jane was chilly

with fear. The apple tree was so small and Florence so close.

Finally the cow became tired and lowered her gaze to the grass. This she began thoughtfully to eat, careful all the time to keep a watchful eye on the small person above her. She never wandered from under the tree. Jane watched until the last buttercup disappeared. Florence considered buttercups great delicacies and ate only one to several mouthfuls of grass. So it was late when the last yellow bloom was gone. Then Florence really started to work on the grass.

"Well, she doesn't intend to go," Jane said, with a sigh. Florence looked up hopefully, but, disappointed, returned to her meal.

"Anyhow, when I do fall, she won't want to eat me. The old beast! Oh, me! I suppose I deserve it for running away, but I do hate to be punished by a cow."

The sun was low and Jane was desperate. She hopped about from limb to limb like a frantic robin. She was out of sight and hearing of the house and could see nothing for it but to stay there until she dropped like a ripe persimmon.

But when she had about decided to climb down and let Florence do her worst, Butch dashed under the tree, barking with excitement at having found her again.

"Oh, Butch!" Jane cried, almost sobbing with relief. "Drive the cows, Butch! drive the cows!"

When Florence was finally allowed to rest, she sat right down and drew a long breath of exhaustion. Not another thought did she give to her victim in the tree.

Then, very stiffly, Jane came down. She gave Butch a hug that made him cough, and they trotted homeward. Glancing over her shoulder at what was left of the sun, Jane said, soberly: "I believe I can finish that psalm before supper."

"A SCOUT IS HUNGRY." BUT HE NEED NOT BE.

"Two heads are better than one, even if one is a cabbage head," they used to say. When a Scout went to the store the other day to buy the "makin's" of a hunter's stew, and found he would have to pay a quarter for a cabbage that used to cost three cents, he made up his mind that the saying was a true one.

Potatoes, he found, cost from two to four cents apiece. They were sold by the quart or peck, but that is how he figured it out. Onions were almost as high as oranges. The sign on the lettuce said "18c."

Cheap candy was as low as garden truck, but—he bought the vegetables.

When he went home with his little bundle—not a quarter of what he expected to purchase with his money—he understood why his mother wore a worried look, why they had been having more soups and less meat, why his shoes went to the shoemaker's three times instead of being thrown away after the first half-sole had worn through.

"What makes things so high?" he asked his father when he returned from the hike, and they sat down to supper. "They say it's the war," replied the father. "All food became scarce in Europe and they sent over here for supplies. Our dealers, finding that they could sell produce in Europe for a high price, sent away shiploads of food that would otherwise have gone into the markets here.

"Soon there was a shortage of food supplies here. Prices went up. People who had things to sell held them for still higher prices. So everything we eat went higher and higher."

"Why don't we raise more things ourselves?"

The Scout hit the nail on the head with his question. Why don't we? In every town and city there are vacant lots. Somebody is paying taxes on them—nobody getting anything out of them. Why not turn them into gardens?

On every farm there are uncultivated spots—low, swampy places which could be drained, stony places which could be cleared, brush lots which could be grubbed into fertility.

A New Hampshire preacher once bought some dynamite, blew out the boulders in his front yard and raised five hundred pounds of squashes in the holes—just as an example to his people.

Making a garden is worth while just for the fun there is in it. The fresh air is stimulating. The digging makes you strong. If you like to fight there's plenty of chance—the potato bugs and cabbage worms will give you an argument that you will never forget.

There is plenty of brain work in it, too. Every separate variety of seed must be planted in a different way. Some need black, mucky soil. Others grow better in sand. Each has its own peculiarities which the gardener must learn.

There are a thousand little knacks that will give you an advantage over the fellow who doesn't know them. Long Island farmers used to wonder why one fellow had such long, juicy rhubarb stalks. They watched him a while and then gathered up their own old nail kegs. He had discovered that when he put a nail keg over a rhubarb plant the stalks would grow 'way up out of the keg instead of remaining short and near the ground.

Gardening helps you to understand the real meaning of religion, too. A boy cannot put a black, dead-looking bit of a thing into the ground and watch it grow into a big, wide-spreading, leafy plant without realizing that a supreme being made the laws of growth and looks on while they operate.

It brings a boy friends, gardening. Every fellow who looks over the fence will stop. Then he will make suggestions. It's easy to get him to lend a hand.—Boys' Life.

THE CHILDREN'S FUND.

Dear Boys and Girls: It is good to be able to tell you that we have already \$30 for those little Belgian children. Now, isn't that splendid? Every one of us will be happy to think about it and to feel that we are sharing what we have with some other boy or girl who otherwise would be so hungry—hungrier than you or I have ever been. I know many more will want to join us in this good time we are having. We might play that we have invited a Belgian child to spend a month, or even a week, as our guest. Then I want somebody to read something about the children of Belgium and write the rest of us what they wear and what they do at school and play. Don't you think that would make our letters interesting? I do.

With a heart full of love for each of my boys and girls, from
Helen Argyle.

If there be one grain of truth in our belief that there is a living God who holds us unutterably dear, who is seeking in all things and through all things ever to lead us to the highest, the fullest, and the best, what room is there for us to fret or fear?—Michigan Christian Advocate.